



# UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE  
United States Patent and Trademark Office  
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS  
P.O. Box 1450  
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450  
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/815,894	03/23/2001	George Harry Hoffman	062834-0164	7883

22428 7590 12/13/2004

FOLEY AND LARDNER  
SUITE 500  
3000 K STREET NW  
WASHINGTON, DC 20007

EXAMINER

GORT, ELAINE L

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
----------	--------------

3627

DATE MAILED: 12/13/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

<b>Office Action Summary</b>	<b>Application No.</b> 09/815,894	<b>Applicant(s)</b> HOFFMAN ET AL.	
	<b>Examiner</b> Elaine Gort	<b>Art Unit</b> 3627	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

**Period for Reply**

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

**Status**

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 06 October 2004.
- 2a) ☐ This action is **FINAL**.                      2b) ☒ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

**Disposition of Claims**

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-18 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) 1-6 is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 7-18 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) \_\_\_\_\_ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

**Application Papers**

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 23 March 2001 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.  
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).  
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

**Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119**

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All    b) ☐ Some \* c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. \_\_\_\_\_.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

\* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

**Attachment(s)**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| 1) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)   | 4) <input type="checkbox"/> Interview Summary (PTO-413)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____ |
| 2) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)  | 5) <input type="checkbox"/> Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)             |
| 3) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)<br>Paper No(s)/Mail Date <u>5/29/03; 1/21/03</u> . | 6) <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Other: <u>IDS: 10/23/02; 9/7/01</u> .            |

## DETAILED ACTION

### *Election/Restrictions*

1. Applicant's election without traverse of claims 7-18 in Paper No. 10/6/04 is acknowledged.

Claims 1-6 are withdrawn from further consideration pursuant to 37 CFR 1.142(b) as being drawn to a nonelected invention, there being no allowable generic or linking claim. Election was made **without** traverse in Paper No. 10/6/04.

### *Double Patenting*

2. Claims 7-18 are provisionally rejected under the judicially created doctrine of double patenting over the claims of list found below of copending applications. This is a provisional double patenting rejection since the conflicting claims have not yet been patented.

The subject matter claimed in the instant application is fully disclosed in the referenced copending application and would be covered by any patent granted on that copending application since the referenced copending applications and the instant application are claiming common subject matter, such as a system for managing a supply chain utilizing a network which all participants of the supply chain have access to data and forecasting capabilities.

Furthermore, there is no apparent reason why applicant would be prevented from presenting claims corresponding to those of the instant application in the other

Art Unit: 3627

copending application. See *In re Schneller*, 397 F.2d 350, 158 USPQ 210 (CCPA 1968). See also MPEP § 804.

09/815559  
09/815590  
09/815660  
09/815688  
09/815727  
09/815729  
09/815731  
09/815734  
09/815759  
09/815792  
09/815813  
09/815864  
09/815899  
09/816033  
09/816075  
09/816083  
09/816092  
09/816151  
09/816160  
09/816167  
09/816203  
09/816212  
09/816285  
09/816331  
09/816357  
09/816358  
09/816388  
09/816412  
09/816420  
09/816429  
09/816431  
09/816434  
09/816454  
09/816455  
09/816495  
09/816503  
09/816507  
09/816536  
09/816555  
09/816560  
09/816561  
09/816567  
09/816582  
09/816881

Art Unit: 3627

09/816922

09/816944

The nonstatutory double patenting rejection is based on a judicially created doctrine grounded in public policy (a policy reflected in the statute) so as to prevent the unjustified or improper timewise extension of the "right to exclude" granted by a patent and to prevent possible harassment by multiple assignees. See *In re Goodman*, 11 F.3d 1046, 29 USPQ2d 2010 (Fed. Cir. 1993); *In re Longi*, 759 F.2d 887, 225 USPQ 645 (Fed. Cir. 1985); *In re Van Ornum*, 686 F.2d 937, 214 USPQ 761 (CCPA 1982); *In re Vogel*, 422 F.2d 438, 164 USPQ 619 (CCPA 1970); and, *In re Thorington*, 418 F.2d 528, 163 USPQ 644 (CCPA 1969).

A timely filed terminal disclaimer in compliance with 37 CFR 1.321(c) may be used to overcome an actual or provisional rejection based on a nonstatutory double patenting ground provided the conflicting application or patent is shown to be commonly owned with this application. See 37 CFR 1.130(b).

Effective January 1, 1994, a registered attorney or agent of record may sign a terminal disclaimer. A terminal disclaimer signed by the assignee must fully comply with 37 CFR 3.73(b).

### ***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 101***

3. 35 U.S.C. 101 reads as follows:

Whoever invents or discovers any new and useful process, machine, manufacture, or composition of matter, or any new and useful improvement thereof, may obtain a patent therefor, subject to the conditions and requirements of this title.

Art Unit: 3627

4. Claims 7-18 are rejected because they lack patentable utility. Claims 7-18 merely claim the manipulation of data ("logic/code for" or "code for") but perform no concrete, useful or tangible result. One example of how this rejection may be overcome is by positively claiming the generation of a report or output of data.

5. Claims 7-12 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 101 because the claimed invention is directed to non-statutory subject matter. Current office policy regarding method claims disclosed as requiring a computer but not claiming the use of a computer is to consider the claimed subject matter as non-statutory for failing to fall within the technologic/codeal arts. Claims must be tied to a technologic/codeal art. Tying the system to a computer would overcome this rejection.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 112***

6. The following is a quotation of the second paragraph of 35 U.S.C. 112:

The specification shall conclude with one or more claims particularly pointing out and distinctly claiming the subject matter which the applicant regards as his invention.

7. Claims 7-18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 112, second paragraph, as being indefinite for failing to particularly point out and distinctly claim the subject matter which applicant regards as the invention.

Claim 7 recites the limitation "the data for ordering office product" in line 6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

In claim 7 line 8 it is unclear what is being claimed relating to "the data". It is unclear as the term "data" is used in lines 3, 4, and 6 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data.

Art Unit: 3627

In claim 7 line 10 it is unclear what is being claimed relating to "the data". It is unclear as the term "data" is used in lines 3, 4, 6 and 8 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data.

In claim 7 line 12 it is unclear what is being claimed relating to "the data". It is unclear as the term data is used in lines 3, 4, 6, 8 and 10 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data.

In claims 8, 9, 10 and 12 it is also are unclear what is being claimed regarding to "the data" as claim 7 refers to data in lines 3, 4, 6, 8, 10 and 12 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data or two types of data.

Claim 13 recites the limitation "the data for ordering office product" in line 6. There is insufficient antecedent basis for this limitation in the claim.

In claim 13 line 9 it is unclear what is being claimed relating to "the data". It is unclear as the term "data" is used in lines 3, 4, and 6 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data.

In claim 13 line 11 it is unclear what is being claimed relating to "the data". It is unclear as the term "data" is used in lines 3, 4, 6 and 9 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data.

In claim 13 line 14 it is unclear what is being claimed relating to "the data". It is unclear as the term data is used in lines 3, 4, 6, 9 and 11 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data.

Art Unit: 3627

In claims 14, 15, 16 and 18 it is also are unclear what is being claimed regarding to "the data" as claim 7 refers to data in lines 3, 4, 6, 9, 11 and 14 and it is unclear if this data is all referring to the same data or two types of data.

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 102***

8. The following is a quotation of the appropriate paragraphs of 35 U.S.C. 102 that form the basis for the rejections under this section made in this Office action:

A person shall be entitled to a patent unless –

(b) the invention was patented or described in a printed publication in this or a foreign country or in public use or on sale in this country, more than one year prior to the date of application for patent in the United States.

9. Claims 7, 12, 13 and 18 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(b) as being anticipated by Shavit et al. (US Patent 4,799,156).

Shavit et al discloses the claimed system for managing a office product supply chain utilizing a network, comprising:

Logic/code for receiving data from a plurality of office product outlets of an office product supply chain utilizing a network (see figure 2 which shows buyers in communication with a networked supply chain system that is capable of receiving data from a office product outlet of a office product supply chain, for example the buyer/office product outlet enters information in a RFQ to obtain a quote/bid such as for office product disclosed in column 13, lines 10+), the data relating to the sale of office product



Art Unit: 3627

by the office product outlets (column 6, line 21 discusses the system being used for "goods");

Logic/code for generating an electronic order form based on the data for ordering office product from a office product distributor of the office product supply chain (such as when the bid is converted to an order, column 13, lines 56+);

Logic/code for transmitting the data to the office product distributor of the office product supply chain utilizing the network (data from the buyer is transmitted to the distributor to get a RFQ and also to place the order, see figure 2, column 13 lines 10+ and lines 51+);

Logic/code for transmitting the data to a office product supplier of the office product supply chain utilizing the network (see figure 2 and column 11, line 15+ regarding sellers (distributors) communicating concurrently with suppliers);

Logic/code for forecasting activity in the office product supply chain utilizing the data (column 7, line 19, Examiner contends that the forecasting disclosed would inherently be used to forecast activity within the supply chain utilizing data relating to the sale of goods, for example a buyer, distributor and/or supplier may forecast future needs and demand by evaluating trends in the data relating to the sale of goods); and

(Regarding claims 12 & 18) Where the office product outlets, the office product distributor, and the office product supplier each forecast utilizing the data (column 7, lines 15+ discloses where the system is capable of providing users with forecasting capabilities).

***Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103***

10. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

11. Claims 8-11 and 14-17 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Shavit et al. (US Patent 4,799,156) in view of Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary.

Shavit et al. discloses the claimed system including the following:

(regarding claims 9 and 15) where the data is accessible to the office product outlets, the office product distributor, the office product supplier via a network-based interface (such as shown in figure 2 and column 5, lines 50+ discloses public networks); and

(regarding claims 10 and 16) where the data is accessible to the office product distributor and the office product supplier only after verification of an identity thereof (user id and passwords are used to identify users to validate access, column 9 lines 43-65 and column 10 lines 1-15);

but Shavit et al. is silent regarding how the data is specifically handled within the system and processed among the parties and thus is silent regarding parsing of the data (regarding claims 8 and 14).

Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary, discloses that it is known in the art to parse data to break input into smaller chunks so that a program can act upon the information

Art Unit: 3627

(see definition of "parse" on page 355). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of Shavit et al. with the parsing of data as taught by Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary, in order to break the data relating to sales into smaller chunks so that the system can act upon the information in sending it to distributors, suppliers, brokers, etc...

(Regarding claims 11 and 17) Shavit et al. discloses the claimed system but is silent regarding the use of the Internet. Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary discloses that it is known in the art to use the Internet for high-speed reliable communications (see definition of "Internet" on page 258). It would have been obvious to one having ordinary skill in the art at the time the invention was made to provide the system of Shavit et al. with Internet access as taught by Microsoft Press Computer Dictionary, in order to provide users with high-speed reliable communications.


### ***Conclusion***

12. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Elaine Gort whose telephone number is (703)308-6391. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday through Thursday from 7:00 am to 5:30 pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Robert Olszewski, can be reached at (703)308-5183. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or processing is assigned is (703)305-7687.

Art Unit: 3627

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is (703)308-1113.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Elaine Gort', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Elaine Gort  
Examiner  
3627

December 7, 2004